

## Forum Piece on Design

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Designing journals is always an interesting challenge. When the idea of designing *The Albatross* was first brought up to me, the journal was coming out of a publication launch featuring low engagement, inconsistent cover designs, and a rushed print job. To me, taking on the design of the journal meant more than simply making the journal look beautiful—it was a mission to rebrand *The Albatross* and to establish it as a reputable, professional journal worth paying attention to in the relative sea of undergraduate publications. With my work in print design and branding converging to meet the demands of the project, I accepted.

I started with a logo. While not always used on the subsequent covers, the logo unified the organization on social media platforms. After first designing the logo for volume 7, I wanted to give the journal a strong rebirth. The cover was designed to be eye-catching and interesting, featuring the new *Albatross* logo (an albatross head) peeking down on the cover from the top of the page. This design was meant to, of course, launch the new branding of *The Albatross* but also to create a recognizable tie-in to the last journal. The back cover featured a minimalist photo-design of an albatross wing. The visual impact was clear: *The Albatross* is back, it's elegant and it's here to stay. *The Albatross* is a journal you should pick up to read. The journal launched with success and had an outstanding season.

When asked to continue designing *The Albatross*, this time for volume 8, I took a different approach with the design. I decided to break from a cohesive cover design, instead choosing to keep the consistency for the journal (and its readers) on the inside: the font and layout for the articles remained the same. For the cover, I wanted to focus on the themes of the different pieces that had been approved for publication. I recognized themes of language, femininity, and class politics as I read through the journal and I began to

form a cover design around a visual interpretation of these themes through the lens of literature. Woodcut illustrations were commonly used for nineteenth-century printmaking as the illustrations could be placed in-line with text during the publication process. Using this historical moment as inspiration, my design featured a woodcut-style illustration of a singular woman, isolated, looking at a group of women. Many of the Victorian texts analyzed in volume 8 would have featured woodcut illustrations in their original publication, such as *Far from the Madding Crowd*. I paired this illustration with a typography-patterned background featuring the authors in the publication and the titles of their articles repeated, reinforcing the narrative print elements in the publication. I also chose a woodcut-inspired typeface for the journal's title.

I took a similar approach to the cover design with volume 9, again focusing on thematic patterns in the articles. This volume, however, had picked up a more progressive, divisive vein: unlike the many Victorian-era texts featured in volume 8, volume 9 contained many more contemporary pieces, including everything from Margaret Atwood to science fiction pieces. These articles thematically linked to racism, identity politics, and feminism. It was interesting to see the preference for these pieces in this latest journal as it diverged from common themes represented in all previous iterations of the journal. I see this change as an interesting cultural shift in what younger generations viewed as important and worth attention in 2019: the shift towards unpacking identity politics and equal rights was prioritized not just in *The Albatross* but in the news and in community activist groups as well. To represent this shift, I pulled together a cover that featured many different pieces of iconography from the themes of many of the individual articles. While some of the elements used on the cover (such as the tree, the tiger, and the city) are directly taken from the references and subject matter written about in their corresponding articles, some of the design was meant to be more abstract. I intentionally cut across the sweeping misty mountains on the cover with harsh, orange tree-lined

mountains. Many of the articles analyzed dystopic worlds, ranging from climate crises to the imposition of a violent global state, projecting a violence that would only increase. These crises were exemplified by essays on Larissa Lai's *The Tiger Flu* and Childish Gambino's "This is America." By contrasting the calming blue tones on the back cover with the harsh, fire-fuelled forests of the front cover, I intended for the reader to pick up subconsciously on this juxtaposition. Additionally, the tree on the cover was meant to give it a focal point and to give a nod to some of the more traditional pieces written in the journal such as articles on Chaucer and Mary Wollstonecraft. In the cover, nature thus transcends themes of motherhood and knowledge, and those decrying the world's current state of destruction through discussions of oral history, literary tropes, and violence.

It has been a joy to design this journal over the last several years. The designs not only reflect the contents and intention of each journal but also my growing skills as a designer to visually portray compelling themes and create cover designs. It has been an invaluable learning experience for me as a designer and I am proud to have physical representations of this journey. It is my hope that *The Albatross* will have continued support from and success within the English department. The journal reflects not only the best writing of UVic undergraduates in English Literature but also their ideological priorities, their political and ethical beliefs, and their fears and hopes for the future.



